



**Meriden Department of Health and Human Services**

**Working for Our Community**



**Meriden Department of  
Health and Human Services**

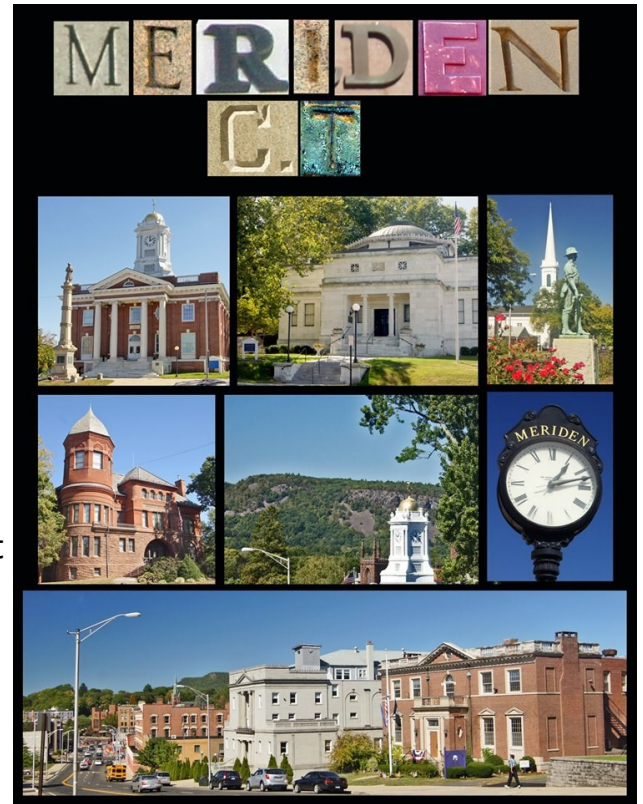
**Annual Report 2018/19**



Dear Meriden Community,

This report is focused on activities conducted throughout the year as related to the 10 Essential Public Health Services (see page 3 for the full list). The 10 Essential Public Health Services describe the public health activities that all communities should undertake.

This annual report is not all-inclusive of the work we do for our community. For a complete list of roles and responsibilities of each office, please visit our website at [www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com). Or, please feel free to call or email our staff; a contact list is located on page 22 of this report.



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# Message from the Director



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Dear Meriden Community,

I am pleased to present to you the 2018-19 Meriden Department of Health and Human Services Annual Report.

This report provides a summary of the many ways in which our Department touches the lives of Meriden residents each and every day to achieve healthy people in healthy communities. We strive to maintain high-quality services as we navigate a rapidly changing public health landscape and health care system.

This past year saw a nation-wide outbreak of measles, a re-organization of mass dispensing areas for public health emergency response, and several new tools for our Department to use to conduct surveillance of the health of our community.

Whether protecting the health of our residents through immunizations and disease investigation or reducing the incidence of foodborne illness through our inspection and licensing of food service establishments, we actively identify and respond to a wide variety of public health problems and issues. These efforts would not be possible without the talent and dedication of our professional staff.

I would like to thank our staff, the City Manager, City Council and Mayor, our community partners and the residents of Meriden for continuing to provide us with the support and collaboration we need to do the work that we do each and every day.

In good health,

*Lea Crown*

Lea Crown, MPH  
Director of Health and Human Services

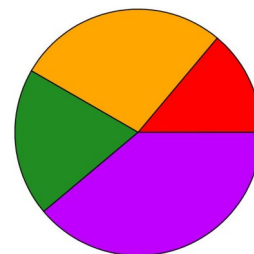
## Ten Essential Public Health Services

1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community.
2. Protect people from health problems and health hazards.
3. Give people information they need to make healthy choices.
4. Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop public health policies and plans.
6. Enforce public health laws and regulations.
7. Help people receive health services.
8. Maintain a competent public health workforce.
9. Evaluate and improve programs and interventions.
10. Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.

# 1. Community Assessment

## ***Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community.***

Our programs and services strive to reflect the current needs of the community. One way we determine which programs to provide is to conduct and/or participate in community assessments in Meriden. Our most recent resources include local assessments conducted by MidState Medical Center, DataHaven, the United Way and the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition. We have also conducted our own surveillance on influenza, STD rates, and health equity and access to care.



We also utilize state and federal statistics, including those from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut Open Data, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Trust for America's Health and the U.S. Census. Often, we benchmark our data to Healthy People 2020 and other towns and cities comparable to Meriden.

### **Meriden Demographics**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Population (2016 American Community Survey) | 60,203        |
| % White                                     | 81.7%         |
| % Black or African American                 | 9.5%          |
| % American Indian and Alaska Native         | 0.2%          |
| % Asian                                     | 1.6%          |
| % Hispanic                                  | 25.2%         |
| Female / Male                               | 52.2% / 47.8% |
| Age 65 or Over                              | 16.1%         |
| Age 19 and Younger                          | 20.5%         |
| High School Graduation Rate                 | 84.4%         |
| Person without health insurance             | 9%            |
| With a disability and under 65              | 9.5%          |
| Median Household Income                     | \$55,547      |
| Percent in Poverty                          | 12.5%         |

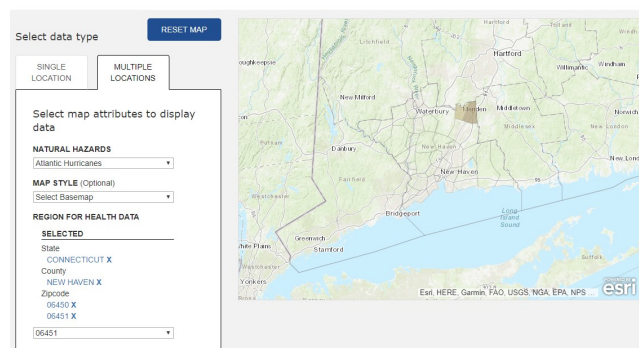
Sources: 2012-2016 American Community Survey (US Census), EdSight, Meriden Board of Education, 2015 Data Haven Community Well-Being Survey



This past year we have increased utilization of several new surveillance systems:

**The U.S Department of Health and Human Services emPOWER Map 3.0**—Over 2.5 million Medicare beneficiaries rely on electricity-dependent medical equipment, such as ventilators, to live independently in their homes. Severe weather and other emergencies, especially those with long power outages, can be life-threatening for these individuals.

The HHS emPOWER Map is updated monthly and displays the total number of at-risk electricity-dependent Medicare beneficiaries in a geographic area, down to the ZIP Code.



The HHS emPOWER Map gives every public health official, emergency manager, hospital, first responder, and electric company the ability to know the number of electricity-dependent Medicare population in their state, territory, county, and ZIP Code. When combined with real-time severe weather and hazard maps, communities can easily anticipate and plan for the needs of this population during an emergency.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health Office of Emergency Medical Services, in collaboration with the Connecticut Poison Control Center (CPCC) at UCONN Health, and pursuant to Public Act No. 18-166, Sec. 5, have enacted a real time reporting mechanism for Opioid Overdoses in the State through Emergency Medical Services called the **CT EMS Statewide Opioid Reporting Directive (SWORD)**. All CT certified and licensed EMS organizations and providers are now reporting to the CPCC after any call where the patient is suspected of opioid use causing decreased responsiveness, respiratory depression or death, whether or not naloxone was administered. Local Health Directors have access to this data and will utilize it to understand the opioid crisis and its future direction. The data gives us the ability to allocate our resources most effectively.

Thank you for  
your  
participation!



UCONN  
HEALTH

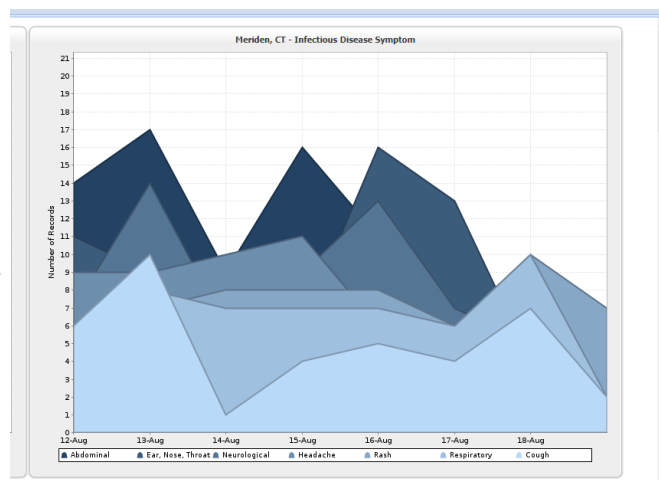


**CT EMS**  
Statewide Opioid  
Reporting Directive

- Call CT Poison Control after any call where the patient is suspected of opioid use, causing decreased responsiveness, respiratory depression or death.
- Call whether naloxone was administered or not.

**SWORD**

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) has transitioned to a new electronic **syndromic surveillance reporting system EpiCenter**. The EpiCenter system analyzes healthcare data for the purpose of detecting anomalies suggestive of public health threats, such as disease outbreaks and bioterrorism. Examples could include extreme weather, chronic disease, zoonotic/vector-borne disease, illness and injuries, and environmental hazards. The Director of Health receives automatic notification when an anomaly is detected. Directors of Health can also log-in to view data and trends. Local health departments then use this data to understand and mitigate risk, do trends analysis, identify outbreaks, write funding applications for programming to address concerns, and share information with appropriate community partners and taskforces.

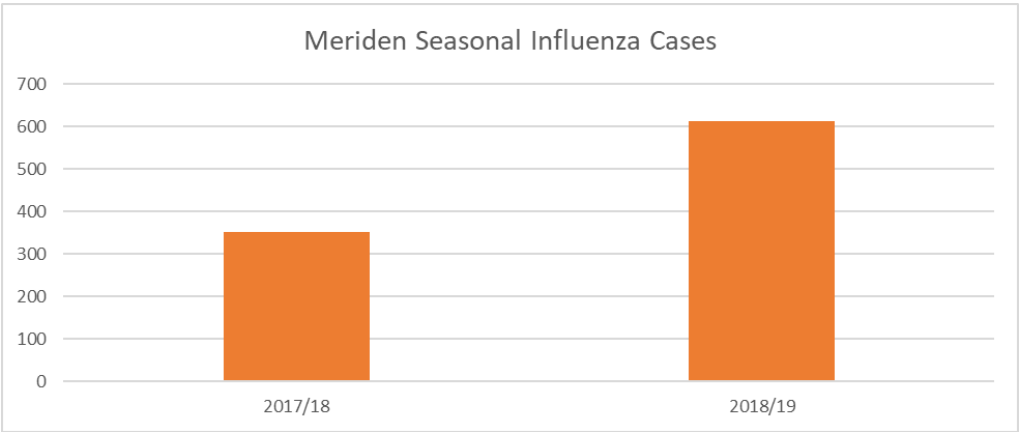


This past year we completed 2 surveillance reports—one on seasonal influenza (the flu), and one on sexually transmitted diseases. Full reports are available on our website.

**Influenza Report**

Influenza—better known as the flu - is a reportable disease; this means that local health departments receive a report when flu is diagnosed by a health provider, hospital or laboratory. This allows our Departments to conduct local surveillance and implement appropriate prevention, risk reduction, and response initiatives. We also monitor the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS) in case there are any reported flu cases that we did not receive a paper report for.

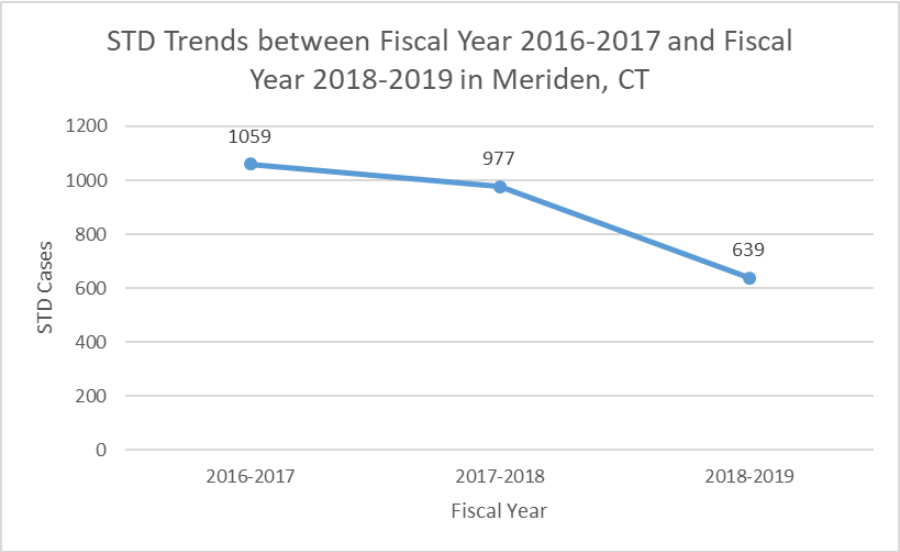
Our total confirmed case count for this season was 614; this was an increase over the previous season (351 confirmed). We also saw cases much earlier this year (October 15, 2018) than last year, when we received our first positive report November 6, 2017. It is important to note that our office only receives lab confirmed cases of influenza; those who do not seek care and get tested for influenza are not included in this count. The CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) confirmed that because walk-in clinics/urgent care centers changed the type of test used to diagnose the flu our cases went up.



**Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)**

Many STDs are considered reportable diseases. We receive reports for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and treponema pallidum. In July 2018 our office started a surveillance project on our STD reports. We broke down data based on the type of STD, gender, and age groups. Cases of Hepatitis B and C were included. We had 636 reports in FY19, 977 in FY18, and 1059 in FY17.

Why the drop in numbers? Due to a transition to electronic reporting, the CT DPH noted that our office did not receive all case reports. Once the reporting system is up and running our Department will have full access to the electronic data.

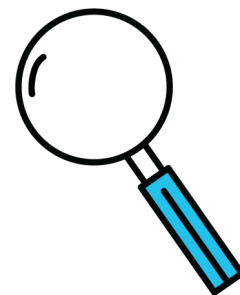


## 2. Investigate Health Problems

***Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community.***

### **Communicable Disease and Prevention**

The following is a sample of communicable diseases and conditions that have been reported to our health department in the last few years. These cases and more are required to be reported to us per Connecticut General Statute 19a-215. We receive mailed paper reports and monitor electronic reports through the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS).



| Reports Reviewed              | 2017-18 | 2018-19 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Lyme/Tickborne Illness        | 25      | 29      |
| Foodborne Illness             | 74      | 12      |
| Sexually Transmitted Diseases | 700     | 575*    |
| Group A/B Streptococcus       | 50      | 37      |
| MRSA/Staph                    | 56      | 43      |
| Hepatitis (B and C)           | 277     | 101     |
| Influenza                     | 351     | 614     |
| Long Term Care Outbreaks      | 9       | 14      |

*\* CT DPH is changing reporting methods; local health does not have access to the new electronic reporting system yet. This number reflects paper reports reviewed by our office.*

### **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention**

In Meriden, children with a lead level of 5mg/dL or more are provided with follow-up and consultation by our Environmental Health staff. Follow-up may include phone calls, home visits, consultation with the primary health care provider and a home lead risk assessment. The ultimate goal is to reduce environmental lead exposure and lead poisoning.

In 2018-19 our office:

- Conducted 263 lead screenings, of which only 7 were over 10mg/dL.
- Reviewed 117 lead lab reports, of which the vast majority (112) were between 5 and 19mg/dL.





## Vaccines Given

Our Clinic office provides adult and child vaccinations, including the seasonal flu shot. Our office conducted 21 flu shot clinics during the 2018-19 season, in addition to offering the vaccine Monday through Friday at 165 Miller Street. All vaccines are given by Registered Nurses.

| Year    | Number of Adult Vaccines Given | Number of Child Vaccines Given |
|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2016-17 | 736                            | 1427                           |
| 2017-18 | 865                            | 1629                           |
| 2018-19 | 889                            | 1654                           |

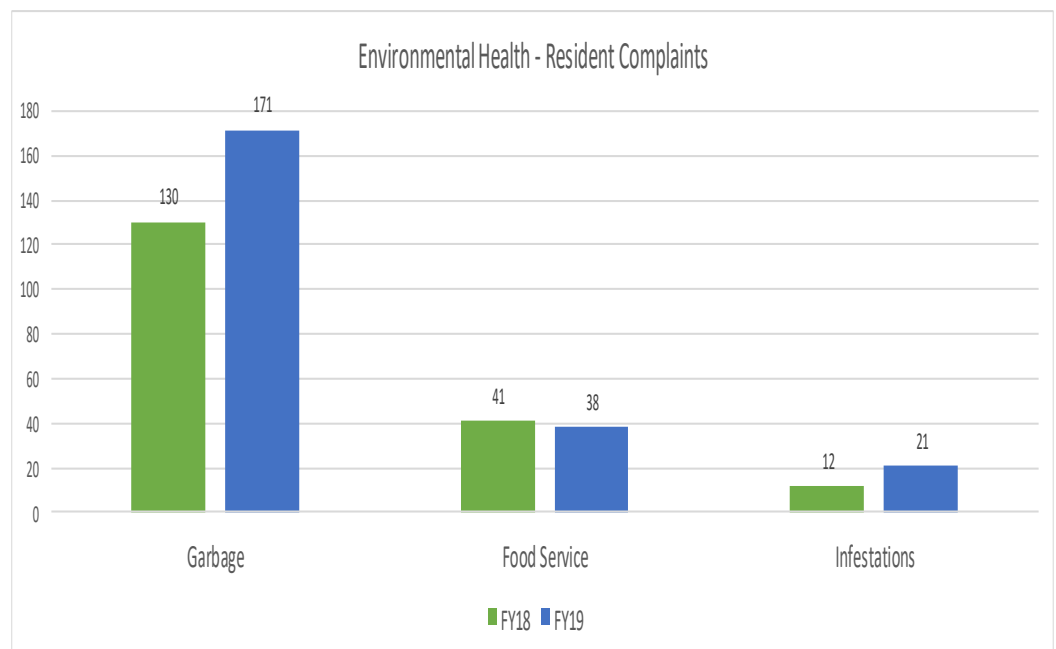
### Measles—Emerging Public Health Concern

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can spread quickly among unvaccinated people. However, the majority of people exposed to measles are not at-risk of developing the disease since most people have either been vaccinated (with MMR—measles, mumps, and rubella) or have had measles in the past, before vaccination became routine.

From January 1 to September 19, 2019, 1,241 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 31 states. Three (3) cases were in Connecticut. Public Health has an important role in any outbreak of measles. Our staff was involved in surveillance and, if a case occurred in Meriden, would have done prompt investigation of cases and contacts help to stop the spread of disease. We also posted prevention messages on our social media and website. Prompt recognition, reporting, and investigation of measles is important because the spread of the disease can be limited with early case identification and public health response including vaccination and quarantine of susceptible contacts without presumptive evidence of immunity.



To the right is a summary of the most common environmental public health complaints received by our office. The most common is for garbage and bulky waste. Other complaints include rodents on properties and lead-based paint issues. Our office investigates all complaints and issues orders to correct according to local and state public health code.





# 3. Inform and Educate

***Inform and educate about public health issues and functions.***

## **Health Education, Promotion and Training**

Staff provides education to a variety of community members and stakeholders through various methods such as social media, press releases, articles in community newsletters, attending community events and face-to-face presentations. Below are just some of the topics that have been covered over the past fiscal year:

- Flu Prevention
- Tobacco Cessation
- Injury Prevention
- FDA Food Code Changes
- Preparing for an Emergency
- Hoarding
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Immunizations
- Rabies, West Nile, and Lyme Disease Prevention
- Food Recalls
- Food Safety
- Heat and Cold Related Illness

## **Childhood Injury Prevention Program**

We are happy to announce that our childhood injury prevention grant has been extended another 3 years! Over the past year we have:

- Held 4 car seat installation classes, providing 150 parent/caregivers with education in collaboration with Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Over 4 classes we installed 200 car seats—all at no cost to participants!
- In addition, we have inspected an additional 35 car seats, re-installing or providing a new seat as appropriate.
- Provided car seat law education at outreach events and community meetings.

Since the grant started in October 2015, we have properly installed and checked close to 400 car seats. This program is funded by the Preventive Health and Human Services Block Grant through September 2022.

**Buckle Up Meriden!  
Every trip, every time!**



**Meriden Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
[www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

## **Mosquito and Rabies Prevention**

Annually, our office promotes seasonal mosquito-borne illness prevention messaging. Messaging is posted on social media, on our website, and press releases are sent to the local paper. Actionable steps for both personal prevention and how to reduce standing water and breeding areas for mosquitoes are included. In July 2018 the State Mosquito Management Program notified our office that the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) identified West Nile Virus (WNV) infected mosquitoes in Meriden. Additional public health alerts were sent out, and our office fielded multiple questions from the public.



In June 2019 our office sent out a public health alert about a raccoon that was caught and tested positive for rabies. This was the first confirmed positive animal since 2016 (see <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Epidemiology-and-Emerging-Infections/Rabies-Statistics> for annual statistics). The alert was posted on social media, in the local paper, and was picked up by several local news stations. Included in the alert were recommend precautions for residents to take.

### WIC Education

In March 2019 WIC staff celebrated Nutrition Month with 2 food tastings. The foods offered were WIC approved foods. Over 40 people learned creative ways to use their WIC foods.

WIC posted #WICWednesday social media posts throughout the year, highlighting the benefits of WIC and nutrition tips.

WIC also attended several community events and partnered with the Meriden School Food and Nutrition program, Head Start, and the Meriden Farmer's Market.



### CT Realtor® Partnership

Our office, along with the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition, partnered with the CT Realtor® Association to promote securing medications during open houses and showings. We held a Realtor® education breakfast in October 2018, and taped an information session in May. The full session can be viewed on the CT Realtor® YouTube channel.



### Certified Food Protection Manager Classes

In our continued effort to prepare Meriden for the anticipated statewide adoption of the FDA Food Code (now January 1, 2020), our office offered 5 Prometric Certified Food Protection classes (3 in English, 2 in Spanish). Staff continue to prepare as well, having completed an online food inspection quality assurance training in April 2019. Our Environmental Health Administrator also completed a Food Inspection Training Officer (FITO) program, which allows him to train, certify, and recertify staff members in the FDA Food Code inspections.

### Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) Program:

In September 2018 the City of Meriden, in partnership with Rushford, was awarded a First Responder Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA) grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant formed the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) program. MORR focuses on first responders using Narcan™ to reverse opioid overdose and then making the connection to services for the client by accessing the Rushford Mobile Crisis Unit. Rushford then provides direct access to a clinician who provides an initial assessment and appropriate referral to treatment.

This grant also allows us to purchase 400 Narcan™ kits annually, hold community Narcan™ trainings, community education sessions on current drug trends and safe medication disposal, conduct outreach, distribute thousands of medication disposal bags at events, and train first responders in Mental Health First Aid.

The MORR grant team meets monthly to discuss program concerns and successes, and to ensure grant deliverables are being met. Program data is collected monthly, and services are professionally evaluated.

This is a 4-year, \$2 million dollar grant that will make a big impact in addressing the opioid epidemic in our community. The program is funded through September 2022. For more information please contact the Director of Health, who is the Project Director.



# 4. Community Engagement

## ***Engage with the community to identify and address health problems.***

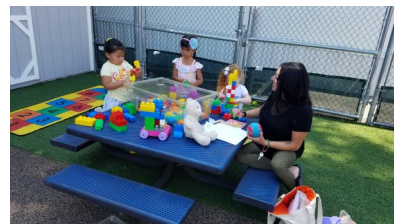
The Meriden Department of Health and Human Services partners with numerous agencies, departments and individuals throughout Meriden to address health problems, provide prevention activities, and promote well being.

### **School Readiness**

Throughout the spring of 2019 teachers from School Readiness programs visited each elementary school and met with Kindergarten teachers in small groups. During these discussions, teachers arrived at some common understandings about expectations in preschool and kindergarten. We hope to continue to arrange this collaboration to make the transition for our School Readiness children a smooth one!



Kindergarten information night took place in early April. During this event parents and children shared a meal, met and talked with elementary school personnel and community leaders, and asked questions about the process for registering for kindergarten and what to expect when their children get to kindergarten.



### **Youth Services—Mini-Grant Project**

What positive impact can \$250 make in our community, and how can youth benefit from being in a leadership position? Through our Youth Service Bureau grant we continue to fund mini-grants to provide youth with just this opportunity.

Projects have to be youth-developed and youth-led, under the guidance of an adult advisor at a recognized organization that serves Meriden. In fall 2018 and spring 2019 we funded 13 projects at \$250 each. Youth presented their final projects to their peers and adult advisors highlighting their efforts from why they chose their project, budgeting for materials and supplies, implementing their idea and lessons learned.

Full reports that include a description of funded projects, can be found on our website.



### **Warming Center Grants**

We partnered with Shelter Now, our local homeless shelter, to write multiple grants to local funding agencies to support drop-in warming center for people who are homeless in Meriden that need respite from the cold. On extremely cold nights during the winter months, local shelters are beyond capacity and cannot meet the demand of the many homeless individuals and families seeking shelter. The warming center provided a warm, safe environment. By keeping some of Meriden's most vulnerable citizens safe and warm during the cold winter nights, the program minimized the health and social service needs of the homeless.

Thank you to the Liberty Foundation, Napier Foundation, and Ion Bank Foundation for contributing the 2018-19 warming center. Overall, from December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019 shelter and services were provided to 73 unduplicated single men and 17 single women for a total of 962 overflow bed nights.

### **Community Action Team**

Since 2017, the Associate Director of Health and Environmental Health Administrator have been meeting on a regular basis with Meriden Police, Fire, and Housing Departments, Hunters Ambulance, and Rushford to address the needs of residents using the emergency room as primary care and other issues, including hoarding-like conditions.

Referrals to our staff come from City departments and neighbors; some are self-referred.

Since inception our Department has accepted 99 cases. Of these, 87 have been successfully closed and 12 are a work in progress. In addition, staff have completed an additional 297 inspections/visits on the open cases. This project is an excellent example of how community partners and city departments work together to help our residents.



### **New Opportunities Partnership**

Our office provided office space to New Opportunities of Greater Meriden (NOGM) for their energy assistance, SNAP, Medicaid assistance, and social security application appointments. NOGM provided a staff person once a week, creating increased access for residents who live downtown.

### **WIC—New Technology**

WIC uses a one-call reminder system to send Survey Monkey participant satisfaction surveys to clients. Over 500 people responded! WIC also started offering WICSmart, an online nutrition education system to give clients more options to receive nutrition education and appointment flexibility.



### **Youth Services Programming: Babysitting, When I'm in Charge, Prom Angels**

2018-19 saw a big uptick in Youth Services programs and partnerships! We offered:

- 2 American Red Cross Babysitting classes, certifying 31 youth.
- 3 American Red Cross "When I'm In Charge" classes, reaching 45 youth.
- 5 American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR classes, certifying 45 youth.



Youth Services also supports Prom Angels by providing storage space for donations and promotion of the annual prom dress and homecoming dress giveaway. Our Teen Room also serves as a pop-up boutique!

Other activities included an ornament decorating event in partnership with YuleFest and Meriden Parks and Recreation, Tobacco 21 promotion, Project Graduation support, Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings, QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training, the creation of wellness baskets for our non-public schools, and participation in the Back to School Expo.

### **National Drug Take Back Day –Saturday, October 27, 2018**

Thank you to all who safely disposed of unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications at the Meriden Police Department! A reminder the disposal box is available 24/7/365 in the lobby of the Department, located at 22 West Main Street.





### Juvenile Assistance and Diversion (JAD)

Funding from the Connecticut Youth Services Association allowed us to partner with Child Guidance Clinic to offer youth in our JAD Program group and individual counseling, education, and support groups. We had 100% positive feedback from youth and families regarding the groups. Additionally, many youth have continued with services at Child Guidance Clinic after their Juvenile Review Board requirements were met, engaging them in much needed services.

Through this grant we were also able to offer youth positive youth development activities to help keep them out of the juvenile justice system.

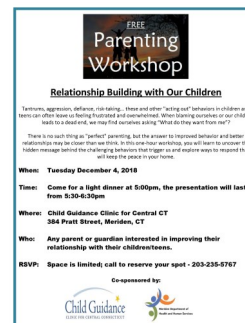
Our JAD program had 82 participants this past fiscal year (2018-19)

### Child Guidance Partnership

In December 2018 our office partnered with Child Guidance in Meriden to provide 2 parent workshops:

- December 4—*Relationship Building with our Children*—participants learned about challenging behaviors explore ways to respond that will keep the peace in the home. 22 people participated.
- December 12—*Anxiety and Depression in Children and Adolescents*—participants learned what anxiety and depression looks like in children and adolescents and what steps they can take to address their child's needs. 26 people participated.

We hope to co-host more parent workshops over the next fiscal year. Workshops will be posted to our social media and website.



### Senior Center

The Meriden Senior Center prides itself on the connections and relationships that have been built with many local agencies and programs that connect seniors with community members of all ages. Over the last year:

- The Center partnered with many local nursing homes, home care agencies and health care providers to support our birthday parties, special events and holiday celebrations over the last year.
- Free tax assistance was provided to over 500 local seniors through a partnership with AARP.
- To keep seniors safe on the road the Center hosted several AARP Safe Driving classes.
- The Center collaborated with the Meriden Board of Education to hold "Web Wednesdays", where students at Platt and Maloney high schools taught seniors various computer skills.
- Youth from the Connecticut Junior Republic facilitated a craft activity with Senior Center members.
- Local youth from the Success Academy coordinated monthly game days with seniors.
- Senior Center members competed in our 8th Annual Josephine E. Bradley Spelling Bee event with students from Washington and Lincoln Middle Schools.

### Social Services Worker

Our Social Services Worker continues to host two successful events every year:

1. "Tis the Season for a Senior" - a holiday gift giving event where gift donations are collected from the community and distributed to members. The December 2018 event provided gifts to 124 seniors.
2. The Meriden Senior Coat Drive collects coats and warm clothes to be given to seniors. This event distributed 125 coats to seniors in need.

The Social Services Worker attends community meetings, such as the Meriden/Wallingford Community Collaborative, HOLA (Hispanic Outreach Leaders in Action), and the Meriden/Middlesex/Wallingford Coordinated Access Network (CAN), to promote services and stay up to date in best practices and community resources.





# 5. Develop Policies and Plans

## ***Develop public health policies and plans.***

### **Public Health Emergency Preparedness**

Our office receives funding from the Connecticut Department of Public Health to support public health emergency preparedness planning, training, exercising, response, and recovery.



This past year saw the regionalization of mass dispensing areas (MDA). Meriden, once MDA 22, is now part of Region 2 MDA. Plans are being revised to reflect this change.

We contracted with the Chesprocott Health District to share a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, who helped the Director of Health complete grant deliverables as well as update plans.

In addition, the following preparedness initiatives were also completed over the past fiscal year:

- **Planning:** Continuity of Operations (COOP), Risk Communication, Worker Health and Safety, and a Multi-Year Training and Exercise plan have been reviewed. Shelter plans are in the process of being updated. A Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for Meriden was completed in November 2018.
- **Training:** We hosted a Training and Exercise Workshop meeting for first responders and emergency management partners in Meriden. The Director of Health provided training to Southern CT State University Nursing students on open point of dispensing operations. The nursing students volunteered at our full scale exercise held in April 2019. The Director and Associate Director completed a training to fit-test staff with N95 masks in-house.
- **Exercising:** In August 2018 staff participated in Rushford's full scale exercise on catastrophic surge, a High Impact Pathogen table top exercise in May 2019, and 2 full scale open point of dispensing exercises hosted by other local health departments in our region. Meriden staff completed a 2-day full scale exercise in April 2019 to test our open point of dispensing facility set up, security plan, and local distribution site process. Quarterly call-downs were done to test our emergency communications system with staff and community partners.
- **Community Education:** Emergency preparedness messages are posted regularly to our Facebook page.

### **Communication Plans**

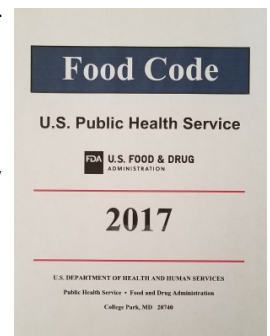
Our office maintains 2 communications plans:

1. **Routine Communications**—this plan outlines day to day communications for health education messages to the public.
2. **Crisis Communications**—if a public health emergency ever happens, the way we communicate with the public changes. This plan outlines our goal to be first, be right, and be credible in the event of an emergency.



### **Meriden Chapter 112 Code Change**

In anticipation of the statewide adoption of the FDA Food Code, in September 2018 our office presented code changes to City Code Chapter 112 to incorporate FDA Food Code language. City Council adopted the changes, which will go into effect when the state adopts the FDA code.



# 6. Public Health Laws

## *Enforce public health laws.*

### Licensing and Inspections

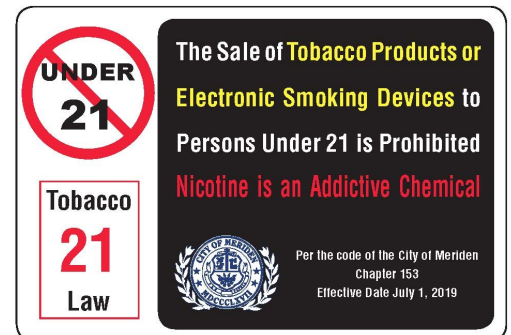
Our Environmental Health staff play an important role in preventing foodborne illness and ensuring a safe and healthy environment. Our Registered Sanitarians are responsible for licensing and inspecting food service establishments (including temporary vendors such as food trucks), public swimming pools, and barbershops/hair salons/nail salons. They also respond to public complaints and elevated child lead cases. Both local and state public health codes lay the foundation and guidance for much of their work.

| Activity                                 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Food Service Establishment Inspections   | 1,265   | 1,177   | 786     |
| Barbershop/Hair/Nail Salon Inspections   | 70      | 40      | 52      |
| Nuisance Complaints and Proactive Sweeps | 886     | 917     | 939     |
| Childhood Lead Inspections               | 358     | 492     | 478     |
| Public Swimming Pool Inspections         | 41      | 24      | 21      |

### Tobacco 21

Tobacco 21 is a national campaign taking a local approach to raising the tobacco sales age from 18 to 21 years of age. This campaign has gained momentum with the Surgeon General's December 2018 declaration that vaping is now an epidemic among our youth.

Meriden is proud to have been a leader in passing a local ordinance to increase the sales age and address this issue. Our Tobacco 21 ordinance (City Code Chapter 153 - Peace and Good Order: Article V - Sale of Tobacco, Vaping, and Nicotine Products) was adopted by City Council in April 2019 with an effective date of July 1, 2019. Since then, our office has hosted 2 retailer education sessions and has distributed signage to all tobacco retailers.



On World No Tobacco Day—May 31—Connecticut passed House Bill 7200, increasing the purchase age from 18 to 21 statewide. This law goes into effect on October 1, 2019. We will continue to educate our community on the dangers of vaping and cigarette use, focusing on the health of our youth. For more information on the Tobacco 21 movement please visit [www.tobacco21.org](http://www.tobacco21.org).

### Immunization Compliance Rates:

In May 2019 the CT Department of Public Health released immunization rates for each public and private school in Connecticut that have a census of 30 or more. Information for Kindergarten and 7th grade (2017/18) was released. We are proud to report that all of our Meriden public schools are 99-100% vaccine compliance! School vaccines—DTaP, Polio, MMR, Hepatitis A and B, Varicella, HiB, Pneumococcal— are required in a series per Connecticut Public Health Code Sec. 10-204a.

It was a very active legislative season for public health! There were several raised bills that had the potential to impact the public health of our community and our Department operations. Our office regularly reviews raised bills and has provided testimony through our professional organizations, such as the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health.

**SB 920: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATION FOR VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES.**

This bill is extended by one year; from January 1, 2019 to January 1, 2020, the date by which CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) must adopt the federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Model Food Code as the state's food code for regulating food establishment.



**HB 6742: AN ACT CONCERNING STANDARDS FOR THE INSPECTION OF SALONS AND A SCOPE OF PRACTICE REVIEW FOR ESTHETICIANS, NAIL TECHNICIANS AND EYELASH TECHNICIANS.** This bill required the CT DPH to establish a standardized inspection form and guidelines by October 1, 2020, concerning the standards for salon sanitary inspections any shop, day spa, or other establishment where barbering, hairdressing, cosmetology, or nail technician services take place. This bill will create a process to evaluate the scope of practice for estheticians, nail and eyelash technicians. It also increases the maximum inspection fee that a Health Director may charge from \$100 to \$250.

**HB 7133: AN ACT CONCERNING BLOOD LEAD LEVEL REQUIREMENTS.** This bill did not pass. It would have lowered the threshold for local health departments to conduct an epidemiological investigation of the source of a child's lead poisoning and provide case management for children with lead poisoning. This change would have increased Meriden's caseload from 10 to 81.

**HB 7200: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS TO PERSONS UNDER AGE TWENTY-ONE.** This bill raises, from 18 to 21, the legal age to purchase cigarettes, other tobacco products, and e-cigarettes effective October 1, 2019.

**SB 608: AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPROVEMENT OF RENTAL SAFETY.** This bill died in session. Besides local building implications, this bill would have made owners of certain residential buildings who failed to abate lead levels in accordance with CT DPH regulations strictly liable for the death or injury of a person that is caused by the violation.

**SB 1085: AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGALIZATION OF THE RETAIL SALE AND POSSESSION OF CANNABIS AND CONCERNING THE ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS IN THE CASE OF CONVICTIONS BASED ON THE POSSESSION OF A SMALL AMOUNT OF CANNABIS.** This bill died in session. It would have allowed individuals age 21 or older to possess, use, and otherwise consume cannabis.

**HB 7424: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTEENTH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET.** This bill impacts per capita funding to local health departments. The bill requires CT DPH to reduce, on a proportional basis, payments to municipal and district health departments if the payments in a fiscal year exceed the amount appropriated for that year.

Our office used Bill Tracker to stay on top of these—and other—raised bills that impact public health. You can also sign up for Bill Tracker at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgabilltracking.asp>

# 7. Access to Health Care

**Promote strategies to improve access to health care services.**

## Meriden Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

Meriden WIC currently serves approximately 3,062 people in the Meriden/Middletown area. WIC works in collaboration with other local agencies to promote the health messages associated with WIC. Program enrollment numbers have been declining nationally; outreach was a focus in the last fiscal year and continues to be a priority. Meriden WIC exceeds the state standards for initiation of breastfeeding; in our area the rate was 82.7% compared to the state standard of 70% initiation.

| Participants                                 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Meriden                                      | 2,121   | 1,805   | 1,755   |
| Wallingford                                  | 295     | 170     | 224     |
| Middletown, East Hampton, Clinton            | 1,345   | 1,059   | 1,083   |
| Total Participants                           | 3,761   | 3,034   | 3,062   |
| Farm Market booklets distributed @ \$15 each | 2,202   | 1,836   | 2,195   |

## Hepatitis A Initiative

In August 2018 our office partnered with the CT Department of Public Health on a pro-active Hepatitis A vaccination campaign. The goal of this program was to provide free Hepatitis A vaccine to drug users and those experiencing homelessness to prevent disease transmission. The program was developed in response to a CDC Health Advisory released in June 2018 on outbreaks of Hepatitis A infections among these at-risk populations. Connecticut has not experienced an active outbreak.

From August 2018 to June 30, 2019 we gave over 200 Hepatitis A vaccines, 50 Hepatitis B vaccines, and over 100 Twinrix vaccines. We also held a community stakeholder information session and several education sessions with community partners. Thank you to our community partners for helping us reach the target populations.



## Senior Mini-Bus Transportation

Through the Meriden Senior Center, mini-bus rides for in-town medical appointments are available for Meriden residents age 55 and over and for people with disabilities under age 55. This service is provided at no cost and is a vital service to increase access to health care services for our seniors.

| 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 2,680   | 2,974   | 3,616   |



## Social Work Services

Our Social Services Worker provides:

- Referrals to community social service agencies for food assistance, energy and fuel assistance, protective services for the elderly, legal aide, and other support needs.
- Help with filling out health insurance applications and finding physicians that accept certain health insurance plans.
- Medicare enrollment, counseling, and Medicare Savings Program applications.
- Assistance with housing applications.

| Clients Served | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                | 1,258   | 1,300   | 1,144   |

## Tuberculosis Screenings

Clinic nurses conducted 269 tuberculosis screenings this fiscal year. This is a 20% increase from the prior fiscal year (225 screenings). The tuberculosis screening is known as the Mantoux tuberculin skin test (TST), also referred to as a PPD test (purified protein derivative).

### CHC Back to School Physicals Partnership

School physicals are required for entry into Kindergarten, 7th and 10th grade. Over the summer of 2019, in order to increase access to school and sports physicals, our office partnered with the Community Health Center's School Based Health Center program. Physicals were provided on-site at 165 Miller Street in our Clinic. The service was extremely popular— we reached 68 students. We hope to continue this partnership in future school years to ensure that students are ready to start on the first day of school!



### School Health Statistics

| Service (both public and non-public schools)                       | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Sick care visits (students)  | 60,885  | 52,741  | 56,444  |
| Sick care visits (staff)   | 1,432   | 1,232   | 1,160   |
| Psycho-social visits   | 1,704   | 1,673   | 2,199   |
| Specialized procedures (such as G-tube feedings, tracheotomy care) | 8,943   | 8,417   | 10,840  |
| Screenings (such as vision/hearing/scoliosis)                      | 14,341  | 10,972  | 8,000   |
| Medications administered   | 25,622  | 26,816  | 23,297  |



## Support Services to Non-Public Schools

Support Services to Non-Public Schools provides part-time services to students at 4 non-public schools in Meriden: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Carver Academy, MidState Christian Academy, and Connecticut Christian Academy. Staff include a Speech/language Pathologist, School Psychologist, and Social Worker.

Between September 2018 and June 2019 staff:

- Serviced 42% of students in the non-public schools in Meriden.
- Screened all kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students (137 total) for speech issues.
- Attended 23 Planning and Placement Team Meetings (PPT's) and made determinations with regard to eligibility for special education services.
- Implemented new social skills program for 1st grade.
- Provided in-service training on phonological awareness and learning disabilities.

| Service   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Speech/Language screenings conducted            | 241     | 229     | 194     |
| Social Work students serviced                   | 45      | 33      | 31      |
| School Psychologist students screened/evaluated | 54      | 81      | 99      |

### Flu Shot Clinics

This season we offered Fluzone HD (for those age 65 and older) quadrivalent, Fluzone quadrivalent (0.5mg for 36 months and older), Fluzone quadrivalent (0.25mg for those 6 to 35 months), Flublok (for those 19 and older), and FluLaval (0.5mg for those 6 months and older).

Our office conducted 21 flu shot clinics during the 2018-19 season, in addition to offering the vaccine 165 Miller Street. Clinics were held at/for:

- Board of Education for employees
- City Hall for employees
- Meriden Water/Sewer Department
- Meriden Police Department
- Meriden Public Library
- Meriden Senior Center
- Maloney and Platt High Schools
- Lincoln and Washington Middle Schools
- Venture Academy
- Pyramid Time Systems



In addition, our public health nurses in the elementary schools provided clinic days for staff in their school. We also coordinated flu shot clinics with the Meriden Fire Department to ensure everyone received their vaccine.

### Screenings and Health Events at the Senior Center

Our Senior Center increased access to healthcare by offering screenings events and health and wellness



programming over "It's Your Life...Live it Well" the last fiscal year:

- Live-Well, a 6-week evidence-based program designed to improve wellness for seniors who are living with chronic illness
- Oral health information sessions with Goodwin College and Lincoln College
- A health fair sponsored by SCSU
- Nursing students, with topics including sun safety, staying hydrated, nutrition, and blood pressure checks
- Fall prevention programming
- Mental health discussions with Family Care Visiting Nursing
- Hearing screenings with Hearing Solutions, LLC
- A monthly walking club was started, led by staff.

## 8. Maintain a Competent Workforce

### *Maintain a competent public health workforce.*

#### **Staff Trainings**

Our Department recognizes that regular staff training is needed to stay current in best practices related to public health and human services. Continuing education is also needed to maintain certifications required to carry out activities, such as nutrition counseling and lead testing. Trainings are either face-to-face or webinars. Over the past year, staff have participated in trainings on (not an inclusive list):

- FDA Food Code
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Hoarding and Housing
- Early Childhood Education
- Freedom of Information
- Mental Health First Aid
- Influenza and Vaccinations
- Syndromic Surveillance
- Environmental Health topics
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
- School Nursing Practices

#### **Confidentiality Training**

2018 was the first year of formal confidentiality training for Health and Human Services staff. Using the Public Health Accreditation guidelines, the Director of Health reviewed with staff:

- Our role as a public agency under C.G.S. Chapter 14
  - C.G.S. 19a-25—Confidentiality of Health Record Procured by the Department of Health or Director of Health
  - Confidential versus public records, and when we can release information
  - Ways to maintain the security of our records, specifically those that contain private health information
- All staff signed off as receiving our Confidentiality and HIPAA standard operating procedure. This training will be held in August annually for staff (in September for our Public Health Nurses assigned to a school health office).

#### **Senior Center Training Days**

In September 2018, the Senior Center closed for two afternoons for staff to attend several important training sessions. The sessions included training on:

- Bloodborne Pathogens
- American Heart Association CPR and First Aid
- Creating a welcoming senior center



Our Mini Bus drivers also received refresher training on how to properly use wheel chair lifts and how to properly secure passengers who use a wheelchair.

Half day trainings will continue on timely topics for our Senior Center staff.

#### **Standard Operating Procedures**

Our office maintains standard operating procedures (SOPs) for general office operations and program specific operations.



SOPs ensure that we are consistent in our Practices, and are also a useful tool for employee onboarding.

SOPs are reviewed annually; however they are updated throughout the year as public health practices change, new federal/state/local regulations or laws are put in place that affect our operations, or based on employee feedback.

## 9. Evaluation

***Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.***

Our Department actively uses performance data to improve the health of Meriden residents through the use of performance measures and standards, to establish performance targets and goals, to prioritize and allocate resources, to make needed changes in policy or program directions to meet goals, and to improve the quality of public health practice. Performance management drives our quality improvement processes.

## Evaluation

We use several types of evaluation:

- Formative evaluation ensures that a program or activity is feasible, appropriate, and acceptable before it is fully implemented.
- Process/implementation evaluation determines whether program activities have been implemented as intended.
- Outcome/effectiveness evaluation measures program effects in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is to achieve.
- Impact evaluation assesses program effectiveness in achieving its ultimate goals.

Our partnerships with Community Health Center and New Opportunities of Greater Meriden helped to increase access to back-to-school physicals and case managers for heating assistance (respectively).

## 10. Evidence Based

***Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.***

## Research

Before starting any new program or activity we review best practices and data (local if possible) to determine program need, development, implementation, and evaluation. Whenever possible, we involve our community in the development of new programming. Some of the resources we use to evaluate best practices are the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CT Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the Community Toolbox.



# Department Contact Information

## Meriden Health & Human Services Department

165 Miller Street

Meriden, CT 06450

Main Number: 203-630-4226

Fax: 203-639-0039

Website: [www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

Lea Crown, MPH  
Director of Health and Human Services  
203-630-4221  
[lcrown@meridenct.gov](mailto:lcrown@meridenct.gov)

Stephanie Denya, RN, MPH  
Associate Director of Health  
203-630-4223  
[sdenya@meridenct.gov](mailto:sdenya@meridenct.gov)

| Program                                | Contact           | Phone        | Email  |
|--|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Environmental Health                   | Scott Bryden      | 203-630-4282 | <a href="mailto:sbryden@meridenct.gov">sbryden@meridenct.gov</a>                 |
| Grants and Finance Specialist          | Vicky Zakrzewski  | 203-630-4229 | <a href="mailto:vzakrzewski@meridenct.gov">vzakrzewski@meridenct.gov</a>         |
| Public Health Emergency Preparedness   | Lea Crown         | 203-630-4221 | <a href="mailto:lcrown@meridenct.gov">lcrown@meridenct.gov</a>                   |
| School Health and Clinic Services      | Stephanie Denya   | 203-630-4223 | <a href="mailto:sdenya@meridenct.gov">sdenya@meridenct.gov</a>                   |
| School Readiness                       | Jennifer Baglin   | 203-630-4222 | <a href="mailto:jbaglin@meridenct.gov">jbaglin@meridenct.gov</a>                 |
| Senior Affairs                         | Rick Liegl        | 203-237-0066 | <a href="mailto:rliegl@meridenct.gov">rliegl@meridenct.gov</a>                   |
| Social Services Worker                 | Natalie Gill      | 203-630-4273 | <a href="mailto:ngill@meridenct.gov">ngill@meridenct.gov</a>                     |
| Support Services to Non-Public Schools | Lisa Samar Ross   | 203-630-4238 | <a href="mailto:supportservices@meridenct.gov">supportservices@meridenct.gov</a> |
| Women, Infants, and Children           | Shelley Carpenter | 203-630-4248 | <a href="mailto:scarpenter@meridenct.gov">scarpenter@meridenct.gov</a>           |
| Youth Services—JAD                     | Tammy Kudla       | 203-639-5058 | <a href="mailto:tkudla@meridenct.gov">tkudla@meridenct.gov</a>                   |